

THE BUDJAK REGION IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE TREATY OF BUCHAREST (1812)

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Abstract. The paper focuses on Budjak's status after the Treaty of Bucharest, dated 1812. Ottomans abandoned Bessarabia to Russia with this treaty. Then, Russia separated Budjak Region from Bessarabia. Before the treaty, both of them had been a whole with the name of Bessarabia. According to Ottoman archive documents, Ottoman Empire dealt with the demographic movements and security problems of Budjak after the treaty. The subject of this study is Ottoman and Russian officials' diplomatic negotiations on these problems.

Keywords: Ottoman Empire, Russia, Black Sea, Cahul, Izmail, Bolgar, Treaty of Bucharest

Introduction

Today being part of Odessa Province of the Republic of Ukraine, Budjak¹ is the historical southern region of Bessarabia encompassing Cetatea Albă, Cahul, Chilia, Tighina and Izmail provinces.² Situated between the Danube and Dniester rivers and the Black Sea, the region extends till Prut River, a tributary of Danube.³ Known for serving as the homesteads for Scythian, Hun, Avarian, Bolgar, Patzinak (or Pecheneg), Cuman, Mongolian, Tatar and Romanian⁴ civilizations among many others on the historical time line, Budjak's emergence as an

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¹ The region has been termed variously in the English language, including Budzhak, Budjak, Bujak and Buchak. In this study, "Budjak" phrase is preferred. Because, this phrase was used at The Encyclopedia of Islam, New Edition. See, Halil İncalcık, "Budjak", *Eİ²*, Volume I, Leiden, 1986, pp. 1286. It is used as "Bucak" in Turkish. The Turkish meaning of the word Budjak is "triangle" or "corner". In Romanian this phrase is used as "Bugeac". In the Ukrainian, Bulgarian, and Russian languages, the area is referred to as Budzhak (Cyrillic: Буджак)

² See, Map I.

³ Aurel Decei, "Bucak", *İA*, Vol. II, Istanbul, 1979, pp. 742.; Halil İncalcık, "Budjak", *Eİ²*, Volume I, Leiden, 1986, pp. 1286.; Kemal Karpat, "Bucak", *DİA*, Vol. VI, Istanbul, 1992, pp. 341. For an assessment of the geographical area covered by Budjak region, based on a historical background, please refer Alper Başer, *Bucak Tatarları (1550-1700)*, Afyon University Institute of Social Sciences, Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis Study, Afyonkarahisar, 2010, p. 1-4. See, Map II: Budjak's Borders.

⁴ Başer, p. 11-16.

autonomous political and administrative region under a distinct name and identity dates back to the Ottoman Period. Bayezid II conquered Chilia and Cetatea Albă, in 1484. To defend and secure the roads reaching at these two castles, he felt the need to bring the entire region under control. Thus Budjak emerged as an administrative, military and commercial region, due to the immense trade and strategic needs.⁵ The final phase of annexation of Budjak Region into Ottoman soil took place in 1538, when Suleiman the Magnificent embarked on a military campaign over Boghdan (a.k.a.Moldavia).⁶ In the aftermath, Budjakregion fell under the exclusive control of Ottoman Empire.⁷ Thereby, Budjak ruled by Moldavians before Ottoman presence in the territory, was ceded from Moldavians and annexed to territories under Ottoman rule, directly with this conquest and a series of later arrangements that took place in the 15th and 16th centuries.⁸ During the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent, the territory falling between Prut and Dniester rivers were organized as an administrative district, under the name Budjak. Budjak was initially brought under the control of the Greater Lordship of Rumelia, as Cetatea Albă Flag post, and then under control of Ozi State, in late 16th cc.⁹ Settlement of Nogai Tatars first emerging with the initial Ottoman conquests of the territory, got even denser after 1538. The region had a large resident Tatar population (Budziak Tatary) during the 17th century.¹⁰

The struggle against Russians in Balkans started by the beginning of 18th century, resulted in frequent Russian invasions of Budjak Region. Petro I had to evacuate the region, following his invading Budjak, for a short period of time. During the Russo-Turkish war (1768-1774), all castles of Budjak, consisting of Cetatea Albă, Chilia, Tighina and Izmail were occupied by Russian forces, however, they were returned back to the Ottoman administration with the Treaty of Kuchuk Kainarji dated 1774.¹¹ The Russians released and returned Budjak

⁵ Karpát, p. 341.

⁶ In this study, "Boghdan" phrase is used. Because, the Ottomans called today's the north of Romania and Moldavia as "Boğdan". Boghdan was ruled by Voivodes who appointed by The Ottoman central government. See, Aurel Decei, "Boğdan", *İA*, Vol. II, Istanbul, 1979, p. 697. "Boghdan, originally Boghdan-ili or Boghdan-vilayeti (the land of Boghdan), Turkish name of Moldavia, so called after Boghdan who in 1359 founded a principality between the Eastern flanks of Carpathians and the Dniester. The name Boghdan-ili appears in the hükm of Mehemed II dated 1455" (Halil İnalçık, "Boghdan", *EI*², Volume I, Leiden, 1986, p. 1252).

⁷ Başer, p. 18.

⁸ Decei, p. 742.

⁹ Karpát, p. 341.

¹⁰ For observations on Tatar settlements and activities in Budjak region, in this century, please refer Alper Başer, "Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi'nde Nogaylar", *Journal of Turkish World Studies*, XI/2, (Winter 2011), Access: <http://tdid.ege.edu.tr/files/AlperBaser.pdf>, Date Accessed: 20.05.2012, p. 117-128.

¹¹ Karpát, p. 342.

together with all the castles they acquired during war, back to the Ottoman Empire through the Treaty of Jassy signed in 1792.¹² The Russians finally reoccupied the territory once and for all, as a non-returnable asset to Ottoman Empire, during the Russian-Turkish wars (1806-1812).

During the final years of this war, the French threat directed towards Russia, put the country at unease. For this reason, Czar of Russia even thought of repealing all his soil claims due to the mandate of settling peace with Ottomans. However, improper functioning of Ottoman diplomacy led to the failure of Ottoman administration to fully exploit the situation and the Treaty of Bucharest, concluded against its favor.¹³ In truth, the Ottomans were as much eager as Russians about immediate execution of the treaty, as they lacked any trust for the French. Consequently, when Russians waived from their claims on Anatolian soil in a number of negotiations, Ottomans consented to signature of the treaty.¹⁴

It is learned from a decoding of an encrypted text originally sent to Istanbul, that Turkish negotiators did not condemn with Anatolia, only. The letter dated January 16, 1812, reports that negotiations were restarted after being paused for a while. On this day, the dandruff hosting the talks was witnessing hot discussions about which parts of land were to be left to Russia. The Ottoman negotiators were insistent upon Budjak Region's remaining under hegemony of the Ottoman Empire, including the lands and neighboring areas of Chilia and Izmail Castles, remanding that Prut River is declared to form the new boundary. Also during the talks reported was a formal statement that nothing less than full coverage of Anatolian Boundaries before the war could be acceptable. The Serbian trouble was another sensitive issue. The Ottoman delegate revealed to their counterpart during negotiations that Serbians had been subjects of the Ottoman Empire since the past, wherefore; they needed no manipulations by others. According to them, no other claims on the matter would have possibly been accepted.¹⁵ However, with reference to the Treaty of Bucharest signed on May 28th, 1812, it becomes clearly obvious that all efforts endeavored by Turkish negotiators yielded nothing beneficial to the Turkish crown, except those concerning Anatolia. As a result of the negotiations, Bessarabia and Budjak were left under the rule of Russia with Boghdan staying under control of Ottomans, but with concessions recognized for Serbians.¹⁶

¹² *Muahedat Mecmuası*, Volume IV, Türk Tarih Kurumu, Ankara, 2008, pp. 7. Ayla Efe, "Silistre Eyaletinde Osmanlı-Rus Savaşları Küçük Kaynarca'dan Berlin'e", *OTAM*, Edition 19, Access: <http://dergiler.ankara.edu.tr/dergiler/19/26/191.pdf>, Date Accessed: 20.05.2012, p. 145.

¹³ *Karpat*, p. 342.

¹⁴ Ahmed Cevdet Pasha, *Tarih-i Cevdet*, Volume 10, Istanbul, 1309, p. 24-26.

¹⁵ BOA. HAT, 989/41825-A.

¹⁶ Reference can be made to the following studies for the Russo-Turkish War of 1806-1812 and the Treaty of Bucharest: Ahmed Cevdet Pasha, *Tarih-i Cevdet*, Volume 10, Istanbul, 1309; Johann Wilhelm Zinkeisen, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Tarihi*, Trans. by: Nilüfer Epeçeli, Volume VII,

Budjakafter the Treaty of Bucharest

Pursuant to the fourth article of the Treaty of Bucharest, Bessarabia and Budjak were left to Russia.¹⁷ This shift of power over these two regions resulted in a number of events, which forced Ottoman Empire to lay interest upon Bessarabia and Budjak during the period after signing of the Treaty. As Budjak region forms the subject of this study, focus will mainly be laid upon the interests of Ottoman Empire on Budjak after the Treaty. Of course mentions will be made concerning the interest of the Empire on Bessarabia, where the context requires. The interest of the Ottoman Empire over the region caused conveyance of a variety of documents until the present day, in Ottoman archives.

The present study has been conducted with much reliance upon these documents about Budjak, available in the Ottoman archives. Attempts will be made towards drawing ideas on such matters like due to which reasons had *Sublime Porte* (Bâb-ı Âli) laid interest over this land and how it managed to carry out the process of intelligence gathering about related issues, within the context of information provided in these documents. The interest of Ottoman Empire over Budjak was influenced not only by historical ties of the Empire with the regional population, but also by some strategical reasons. At this end, it can clearly be seen that Ottoman government was interested in Budjak for mainly two reasons.

The first of these reasons is associated with demography and the second, with security. Demographic issues are related to Christian communities who intended to pass into the territories under Ottoman control (Boghdan), along with the Muslim population left in the territory after its invasion by the Russians. The intension in the aforesaid communities towards passing on to the Ottoman side necessitated the conduct of certain talks between the two governments. Security related issues, on the other hand, consisted of raids performed by the Greek residents of the region over Boghdan and Russian military activities in Budjak district.

The aforementioned subjects formed the topics of main concern, discussed by and between Russian and Ottoman governments, at various time intervals in a time-frame commencing with the Treaty of Bucharest in 1812 and ending in late 1820s. These issues will be dealt with, in the following sections.

Yeditepe Publications, Istanbul, 2011. Nocalae Jorga, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Tarihi*, Trans. by: Nilüfer Epçeli, Volume V, Yeditepe Publications, Istanbul, 2009, p. 139-186; Virginia H. Aksan, *Kuşatılmış Bir İmparatorluk Osmanlı Harpleri 1700-1870*, Trans. by: Gül Çağalı Güven, Türkiye İş Bankası Publications, Istanbul, 2010, p. 274-296; Fahir Armaođlu, *19. Yüzyıl Siyasi Tarihi (1789-1914)*, Türk Tarih Kurumu, Ankara, 1997, p. 91-97; Enver Ziya Karal, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, Volume V, Türk Tarih Kurumu, Ankara, 1995, p. 98-100.

¹⁷ Ahmed Cevdet Pasha, p. 245.

Demographic Movements

The demographic movements this study concerns about were shaped mostly with reference to documents stored in Ottoman archives and by conclusions derived from the Ottoman aspects. Therefore, this study is not meant, hence, does not intend to draw explanations about all demographic movements with actual numbers, that took place in Budjak region, after the Treaty of Bucharest. The Ottoman Empire paid close attention to the dynamics of the community resident in the region. This dynamics emerged from the time when Russians initially invaded the region in 1806. Especially deportation of Muslim community from the region to replace with Christian community groups had been a process that started during war and intensively persisted, after settlement of peace. The *Sublime Porte* had to lay close attention to regional movements of both Muslim and Christian communities, following peace. The reason for this can be explained as following a mutual faith for the part of Muslims, in addition to these communities will to return to their original identities. In any case, the Ottoman Government closely traced and gathered comprehensive knowledge and intelligence about the resettlement policies enforced by the Russian Government on the geographical region and subsequently emerging demographic movements and intervened some of them, although to a poor extent, when required. It is clear that huge demographic movements took place in the region, during this period.¹⁸ For instance, in 1814, the Budjak local government received royal instructions to build sufficient accommodation for 10 thousand households drawn from the inner parts of Russia in the countryside of Budjak district.¹⁹ The demographic movements happening all in a very short time and with pressure entailed to rise of certain problems related with resettlement and border violations, in the region. The *Sublime Portedid* nothing about settlers sent by its Russian counterpart. However, for two reasons apart and beyond this, Ottoman Empire felt the need to pay close attention to demographic movements ongoing in the territory. These have been the consequential status of Muslim communities left in Bessarabia and Budjak and attempts of certain Christian groups resident in the Region towards passing to the Boghdan side.

Russia expelled out the entire Muslim community when it first entered Budjak at the outbreak of war to Crimea, while sending tradesmen, soldiers and civilians of Ottoman origin who were attending administrative affairs of the state,

¹⁸ “Following 1812, the territory received migratory inflows of a variety of nations, including but not limited to Bulgarians, Gagauzes, Russians, Ukrainians and Germans. The Bessarabian population has grown to 550.000 in 1823, from a base of 240.000 in 1812 (which was one fifth of Budjak population). A majority of these immigrants were settled in locations vacated by expelled Muslim communities in Budjak.” Cited from Jewsbury by Karpat, 1992, p. 342.

¹⁹ BOA. HAT., 956/41030.

to the internal parts of Russia, upon declaring them prisoners of war. Consequently, the Muslim people were deprived from the right of living in their own homesteads and had their lands forfeited by the Russian Government. Official announcements were made for Christian community living at the southern parts of Danube River, for reoccupying the houses and lands once owned by the then deported Muslims. In the pace of these developments, many Bulgarians and Gagauzes started a migratory movement towards Bessarabia, from Bulgaria and Dobruja and in the meanwhile, settled in Budjak as their new home.²⁰ According to article seven of the Treaty of Bucharest, Muslim communities (Budziak Tatars), originally residing in the region abandoned were to be allowed for migrating to Ottoman soil, together with their transportable commodities and personal effects.²¹ As mentioned above, a certain part of the Muslim community was expelled to Crimea, in time of war. While some among this community found out a way to reach Ottoman side, others received treatment contrary to the arrangements in the Treaty. Therefore, they claimed their rights under the Treaty. These Muslim groups left to isolation in Crimea consisted of Budziak Tatars and Yedickioglu, Yedibasan, Camboyluk and Kyrgyz tribesmen. Russia was intending to forcefully detain these tribes in Crimea. Acting upon this occasion, the Ottoman government made a variety of attempts concerning the status of these tribes held captive, within the framework of the rights vested unto them by the Treaty. As can be understood from a reading of a petition served to the Ottoman government 15 months after the signature of the Treaty, namely on August 1813, these tribes remained in Russian soil. According to the information supplied on this petition, Russians appointed an officer in charge of these tribes, whose principal duty was to try and convince people to become Russian nationals. The tribes submitted a factual statement with appropriate reasoning to the Ottoman government, in order to be able to pass to the Ottoman soil. This factual statement incorporated references to article seven of the Treaty of Bucharest. This article allows an 18-month period for Muslims wishing to migrate to Ottoman territories.²² The central imperial government in Istanbul was informed about the possibility of attempts towards making these communities Russian and prevention of those groups in them, who show deliberation to cross the border to join Ottoman people, from reaching at Crimea borderline. Upon receipt of this knowledge, Sultan Mahmoud II ordained that a note be sent through the Russian ambassador for extradition of Muslim captives, in a strong and decisive phrasing, with particular reference to the related provisions of the Treaty of Bucharest, and if needed, a person be appointed to hold public office to deal with this issue, in particular.²³

²⁰ Karpat, p. 342.

²¹ *Muahedat Mecmuasi*, p. 53.

²² *Muahedat Mecmuasi*, pp. 53.

²³ BOA. HAT., 979/41578.

Issues concerning Budziak Tatars not staying within the territorial borders of Russia were also appended to the agenda of the *Sublime Porte*. In the meantime, a majority of Budziak Tatars were settled on Ottoman lands. The Ottoman government also took a close interest in these groups.²⁴ Some of the Budziak Tatars who stayed in Budjak until 1812 migrated to Dobruja, following the Treaty of Bucharest. There, Budziak Tatars have been a separate governor.²⁵ Issues regarding governance of Budziak Tatars on Ottoman lands also took part in the agenda of the Ottoman government. For example, Sultan Bahadır Giray acquired right of governance of Budziak Tatars by way of tender, in 1813. The same role was claimed by Sultan Selimgiray, who was residing in the village of *Subashi*. The Ottoman government thought a quarrel, thus a harm would occur, no matter what decision is made as to whom this authority would be granted. Therefore, it decided to reinstate the same old officer in its former position.²⁶ Budziak Tatars continued to serve the military of the Ottoman State, as in the past. In 1817, for instance, the *mustahfiz* (guardians of the castle) deployed at four posts for the safeguarding of Sunne straits were populated by men from Budziak Tatars.²⁷ Today, it is possible to gain access to records verifying that Budziak Tatars continued to hold military offices in service of Ottoman government, until 1840s.²⁸

Another group who intended to pass on the Ottoman side was not the Muslim community who was seeking out for refuge due to religious concerns, but, Christians, who were rather discomfited by the ways of the government.²⁹ They were switching to Ottoman (Boghdan) side by way of desertion. The means and methods employed by this community for fleeing are reflected on archival documents. Tenrijiki? village settled on the right banks of Danube River, downstream the Port Timarabad and Tartaluvri? village both had their communities assisting the deserters in their cause. These folks were warding off Kazakh soldiers who were deployed in the territory as members of the guard, with their weapons. They were defecting to Isakcha county and its neighborhood, after passing through the dire and marshy sections of the coastal line with their belongings and animals, at every opportunity they found. These escapes were

²⁴ Budjak District under Ottoman rule is known for its huge Tatar population. Settlement of Tatar communities in the Budjak District started during the reign of the State of Golden Horde. Tatar population increased from the second half of 16th century, for such reasons as drought and internal conflicts. Tatar's becoming permanent in existence in the territory took place under the rule of Ottoman State. For Budziak Tatars' arrival at and permanently settling in the region, their administrative, social and economic activities please refer Başer, *Bucak Tatarları*.

²⁵ Karpat, p. 341.

²⁶ BOA. HAT., 629/31100.

²⁷ BOA. C.AS., 292/12109.

²⁸ BOA. C.HR., 9/429.

²⁹ BOA. C.ML., 88/4010.

taking place not only from Budjak, but also from Bessarabia. As an example, some among the community residing at deserted rural parts of Bessarabia passed on to the Ottoman side, for receiving maltreatment. Subsequently, the Russian State felt the need for making an administrative rearrangement in the territory.³⁰ The situation had reflections on the Russian emperor, who immediately appointed a good man to the administration, in an effort to regain the trust and favor of his subjects. To ensure the raising of public awareness on this new update, he sent a royal statement of position to the Metropolitan Bishop of Bessarabia.³¹ According to the personal opinions of the Voivode of Boghdan, as Russians failed to show mercy and grace for their subjects like Ottoman did, the people of the opposite bank who have separated their ties with Boghdan, wanted to migrate.³²

Such movements were naturally found unpleasant by Russian administrators. Russia held a number of talks with Ottoman State, being the ruler of the opposite side of the border on the matter, in addition to effecting and enforcing novel administrative arrangements, in order to stop these migratory outflows.³³ In 1815, for example, a group settled on an abandoned land to the right side of Danube River attempted to migrate to the Ottoman lands. Acting upon this occasion, Italinski, the ambassador of the Russian government gave a statement of position to the Ottoman government, incorporating his government's complaints. The main assertion and complaint of the ambassador of the Russian Government are centered around the allegation that Ottoman local government officers personally foster and incite such movements. According to the Ottoman government, such assertion and complaint was actually stemming from unjust allegations directed by Russian commanders attending border posts, against their colleagues of Ottoman origin, on the other side of the border. There is not a situation or reason for reiteration of this warning. However, the report submitted by the Russian consul in Jassy to the Russian ambassador in Istanbul, needs a shift in the way of thought. According to this report, despite being warned by the Ottoman Government on the matter, the Voivode of Boghdan and Ottoman officers attending the border post, located on the right banks of Danube River mistreated or disregarded such warnings. These officers were not only encouraging those who attempted to flee, but also clearing all the way through their escape routes and showing all kinds of ease. This attitude was causing an increase in the number of incidents, rendering the escapes permanent. The consul had to file recurrent complaints about the Voivode of Boghdan, because of this. The ambassador presented this factual statement he received from the aforesaid consul, to the Ottoman Government. In his presentation, the ambassador mentions

³⁰ BOA. HAT., 1285/49837-A. See, Appendix I.

³¹ BOA. HAT., 1285/49837-B.

³² BOA. HAT., 956/41030.

³³ BOA. HAT., 1101/44532-F.

of his discomfort about Voivode's taking actions at sole will and discretion, despite the clear, standing provisions of the Treaty of Bucharest. The ambassador humbly requests from the Ottoman Empire the immediate extradition of the refugees from Budjak community, based on the consul's report, in courtesy. Making notion of the fact that this situation, which is contrary to good faith, would put the friendly relations between the two emperors in danger, the ambassador calls for the issuance of notices of warning, containing straight orders for the Voivode and other officers of the region who are involved in this, in order to prevent and dissuade this kind of action in future.³⁴ Speaking within the knowledge supplied on documents available in hand, it is possible to derive the conclusion that these orders were fulfilled, with reference to discontinuance of talks and correspondence on this particular matter in the forthcoming periods.

The Problem of Security

Border violations were not taking place only in the form of escape attempts of community running from maltreatment of the government. There were also military raids in pursuit of escapees ongoing since 1823, which were setting the Ottoman side at discomfort, as another form of border violation. The official Ottoman language assigns two names to define people getting involved and assuming roles in such raids. One is brigand and the other, rebel. The brigands or rebels who performed raids that originated from Budjak and directed against Boghdan were resident Greeks of the region. These attacks should be an outcome of the Greek Rebellion out broke in Mora, 1821. This way, Greek residents of Budjak and Bessarabia were supporting this riot taking place in Mora. As a matter of fact, according to the Voivode, the reason underlying the attacks oriented from Budjak towards Boghdan was the feelings of hostility and vengeance of the Greek nation against the Ottoman State.³⁵ Another reason these attacks may be related to putting an end to the selection of the voivode of Greek origin by the Ottomans. In 1821, voivodes were started to be elected from the Rumanian prince.³⁶ This situation may possibly have disturbed Greeks in the region.

The correspondence carried out in writing between the Royal Ottoman Government, the Voivode of Boghdan and the Commander of Budjak concerning the Greek assaults are found in Ottoman archives. According to these inscriptions, a certain gang of rebels located on Budjak side performed attacks over Boghdan, to attempt and assassinate many Boyars and patriarchs. This had lain fear over the territory. The situation was reported to the Commander of Budjak by the Voivode,

³⁴ BOA. HAT., 1165/46092-B.

³⁵ BOA. HAT., 1141/45392-B.

³⁶ Abdülkadir Özcan, "Boğdan", *DİA*, Volume VI, Istanbul, 1992, p. 271.; Sacit Kutlu, *Milliyetçilik ve Emperyalizm Yüzylında Balkanlar ve Osmanlı Devleti*, İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Publications, İstanbul, 2007, p. 57.

who received an answer assuring that all related people were punished accordingly. Furthermore, the Commander assured that whoever dares to trespass the border to the Boghdan side would be dealt with, at the instant.³⁷ Efforts of commanders of Bessarabia and Budjak to prevent the Greek rebellions seemed contrary to the state policy of Russia. As is known, Russia as other European States supported the Greek rebellion did not give fair quarter to separatist ideas and actions at first years of rebel in 1821-1824. Because Metternich's system did not allow this. Believes in looking for the discoverer of the opportunity to Russia was forced to leave it alone Greeks in this years.³⁸ Required by this policy, Budjak and Bessarabia commanders have taken measures for attacks in Boghdan by Rums.

The Voivode points out another dimension of these attacks. According to Voivode's assertion, some rich reverends of Budjak district gathered a huge amount of money with Greek tradesmen they collaborated with, in a pool established by and between themselves inter alia, for and in favor of these rebels. This small fortune accumulating in the pool was then used for arming the Rebels and inciting people of Boghdan. Therefore, the Voivode asked for exercising more care on the issue, from the Commander of Budjak.³⁹ But the Commander of Budjak has an opinion to the contrary. He reports that although some of them were found to engage in suspicious activities formerly, the priests resident in Budjak have been inhabitants of the place for two years, during which time, all they cared about was their own business, let alone taking any action, as asserted. According to the General, the source of this baseless claim is the hostility the people of Boghdan feel against these Greek reverends. Therefore, all what the General asks for is banning of such false news from Boghdan.⁴⁰ There apparently exists some sort of organization in Greek raids, although it is not possible to ascertain whether or not priests have any support or assistance in them. As a matter fact, similar actions were taking place in Bessarabia, too. In another factual statement inked by the Voivode, information is provided about the Greek rebels found in Bessarabia. A certain group of Greek brigands residing there were in preparation of an assault targeting Boghdan, in 1823. The Voivode reports that an abundant amount of gunpowder and shells were found and captured in possession of 12 brigands, who were learned to be engaged with manufacturing of ammunition, at Serbian town located in Kichinev and around 600 brigands were detained.⁴¹ According to another information, received by Voivode, 3000 Greek rebels would attack to Boghdan from Kichinev.⁴²

The Voivode had sent repetitive letters to the Russian General, for the disarmament and disablement of these rebels, in Bessarabia. By the looks of it, the

³⁷ BOA. HAT., 1141/45392-B.

³⁸ Karal, p. 114.

³⁹ BOA. HAT., 1141/45392-B.

⁴⁰ BOA. HAT., 1143/45453-B.

⁴¹ BOA. HAT., 1143/45453-E.

⁴² BOA. HAT., 1141/45394-A.

General did not take any of these messages or the complaints contained in them, serious. However, forthwith upon the revelation of facts, Russians started to "bring the rebels into line".⁴³ It is perceived that the Commander of Budjak appointed a number of officers to stop Greek rebels, before they put their intentions to perform a raid over Boghdan, into action. It is further understood, from a reading of statements sent to Boghdan, the Commander in fact did all available in his power to prevent crossings to the other side. To give an example, the General stopped an attempt of alliance by one gang of rebels in Budjak with other thugs for the purpose of attacking Jassy at its emerging phase, in a heroic deed.⁴⁴

The Voivode of Boghdan also had recourse to a number of measures regarding these raids, on its part. One of them was the creation of villager posts situated in certain frontier areas, to serve as prefectures. The Russian General should have been disappointed with these measures; he sent a letter to his counterpart that this would be an unnecessary measure, giving his rationale, in the following words: "Exaggerated news was spread among the community by some hate mongers, which raised concerns. All efforts are being endeavored, as necessary to obviate such disturbances and seditions and to reinstate peace and order in the region. We have succeeded to obviate these seditions as a result of our dedicated efforts. Thanks to this, nobody is allowed to pass on to Boghdan side, from Budjak. Therefore, never expect or feel anxious about any potential harm either to you or your owned lands and territories, from such a gang of brigands like this." The General reports that the need no longer exists for sustenance of these or other like posts, based on the aforementioned facts. There is also another measure, which seems to have set the General at discomfort and therefore is worth to mention here. The Voivode asked the Ottoman government to send soldiers due to border violations. This situation should have disturbed the Budjak Commander, because he made notion of this in his statement, however, he excused it with the substantial pressure on regional community. The Russian General Inzof maintains that increased military presence in Boghdan would only increase the burden and hardship on royal subjects. In conclusion, Inzof kindly requests that false and unfounded information not be relied upon, since their primary aim is to eliminate trust and order established between Budjak and Boghdan.⁴⁵

Another matter that required immediate attention of the Ottoman Government on the Budjak region had been the Russian military activities. The supply of troops gathered at Bessarabia and Budjak sides and other military shipments were among the regional matter that were closely monitored by the Ottoman government.⁴⁶ By closely monitoring the military shipments realized by Russians, the Ottoman government asked counterparts to reveal justifiable

⁴³ BOA. HAT., 1143/45453-A.

⁴⁴ BOA. HAT., 1143/45453-B.

⁴⁵ BOA. HAT., 1141/45392-C.

⁴⁶ BOA. HAT., 925/40195.

grounds therefor.⁴⁷ The Ottoman Government supplied intelligence on the matter mainly from the Voivode of Boghdan. The Voivode had reached to such intelligence through his loyal spies. Another information source of the Ottoman Government was the Governor of Silistra. The Governor closely monitored and reported to the central administration each and every move of the Russian soldiers, through his men attending the region. To give an example, the activities of the brother of Russian Czar, who was recruiting soldiers from Budjak and Bessarabia were monitored and communicated on a real time basis by the Governor of Silistra and the men of the Ottoman Government found in the region.⁴⁸

In the aftermath of Treaty of Bucharest, military movements started to occur from 1814, around Boghdan. Because of the stressful stance between the Austrian and Russian Governments in the matter of Poland, a military activity was encountered at both sides of Boghdan, which was perturbing the Voivode. The Voivode was trying to obtain information about what all that military shipment, troop gathering, wintering and other martial activity was about, through his spies. The Voivode was then transferring the information obtained to the *Sublime Porte*. According to the information supplied by the Voivode, Austrian army was gathering troops in Bukovina and Galicia. Also a fully equipped Austrian troop of a few thousand soldiers was dispatched to these areas. It is also understood that food rations necessary for these soldiers were supplied. According to the opinion of scientific environs (erbab-ı vükuf), those preparations were a harbinger of hostility and an outbreak of war between Austria and Russia. The Voivode was also capable of gathering information about the internal correspondence of the Austrian Government. News was spread across the region that official records/documents were to be transferred to another location. The Voivode mentions of an official document inscribed to inform that the above news was far from reflecting the truth. But the Voivode was not overseeing the Austrian side, only. He was also a close tracker of military movements taking place in Budjak and Bessarabia. According to the information the Voivode obtained, the castles standing in the abandoned regions were repaired, although not any troop dispatches had taken place by the Russians yet, from the opposite banks of Prut. Also instructions were already given to regional high ranking officers for the preparation of rations in sufficient quantities to feed a Russian army of eight to ten thousand soldiers, who would be wintering at Budjak. The Voivode indicates that the idea of a plausible war between Austria and Russia led by the Polish disagreement was started to be heard across the region.⁴⁹

The military movements on both sides put Boghdan side under deep consideration, although it seems as a result of a stress between Austria and Russia. Soldier shipments to the Budjak region led to spreading of rumors in certain areas

⁴⁷ BOA. HAT., 1057/43482-F.

⁴⁸ BOA. HAT., 841/37877.

⁴⁹ BOA. HAT., 962/41205-A.

of the Boghdan, Ibrail and Danube shore. These rumors and the discomfort caused by them was heard by Budjak Chief Superintendent Ratzowitz from Russian Ambassador in Jassy, who then sent a letter to the Voivode of Boghdan, including clarifications as to the ongoing military movements. According to this letter, these military movements are mainly caused by the needs of putting barracks in order, ensuring security across the country and safeguarding castles and borders. The purpose of Ratzowitz is to eliminate malevolent news spread by people who don't want persistence of good relations between the two states.⁵⁰ The Voivode should have assumed this information supplied to him by the Chief Superintendent to be true, based on knowledge he had gained from various other sources, in the past. Because the Voivode previously informed the Ottoman Government that the number of soldiers allegedly sent to the region in 20 to 25 thousand may in fact not exceed 15 thousand and that these soldiers were deployed at abandoned castles and some of them would be assuming safeguarding posts along the river, as cited from the letter of Ratzowitz.⁵¹

The second military movement which upset the Ottoman Statement was observed during the, Greek Rebellion.⁵² The Russians embarked on a campaign for recruiting soldiers from Bessarabia and Budjak regions.⁵³ These activities also continued in the then coming years. Recruits gathered from these regions were dispatched to the frontier areas, in 1825.⁵⁴ During the 1826-1827 period, troops were dispatched from Russia to Bessarabia, the Castle Izmail was repaired⁵⁵ and cannons were shipped to Bessarabia.⁵⁶ The Russian activities in the region continued till the final years of Greek rebellion. Throughout this period, the Ottoman governors, military authorities and the Voivode gathered information about the military activities and logistics by sending out spies.⁵⁷ For instance, during the blockage of Ottoman-Russian talks of 1827, which were held concerning the Greek Rebellion⁵⁸ knowledge that suggests an increase in Russian military reinforcements in the region was conveyed to the central headquarters through this channel.⁵⁹

⁵⁰ BOA. HAT., 1101/44532-F.

⁵¹ BOA. HAT., 956/41030.

⁵² See, for Greek Rebellion, Georges Castellan, *Balkanların Tarihi*, Trans. By: Ayşegül Yaraman-Başbuğu, Istanbul, 1995, pp. 265-278.; Aşkın Koyuncu, "Yunanistan'da Bağımsız Devlet", *Balkanlar El Kitabı*, Volume I, KaraM&Vadi Publication, Ankara, 2006, p. 488-514.

⁵³ BOA. HAT., 841/37877.

⁵⁴ BOA. HAT., 925/40195.

⁵⁵ BOA. HAT., 1058/43504-B.

⁵⁶ BOA. HAT., 1087/44231.

⁵⁷ BOA. HAT., 1142/45448-A.; BOA. HAT. 1151/45696.

⁵⁸ During these talks, United Kingdom and France were also sitting at the opposite site of the Ottoman State, in addition to Russia(Karal, p. 116, 118).

⁵⁹ BOA. HAT., 1140/45349.

Conclusion

Budjak region, which was ruled by various nations in historical chronology, gained an autonomous state as an administrative district forthwith its entering under the rule of Ottoman Empire in 15th and 16th centuries. Although temporarily claimed by Russians as their territory in time of armed conflicts against Russia in Balkans throughout the 18th century, Budjak district was returned back to possession of Ottoman Empire, through the treaties signed, during the period. However, forthwith upon this final war and the resultant Treaty of Bucharest, this region was irretrievably passed to the control of Russia, from Ottomans.

By the first moment they entered the territory of Budjak, the Russians manipulated the demographic structure of the district, replacing Muslims which they expel out of the territory, with Christian communities they dragged from Balkans, Europe and inner parts Christian and Jewish communities they pulled from Balkans, Europe and inner parts of Russia. The Ottoman State closely traced and tried to enforce the rights of the Muslim community left in the territory in the aftermath, arising out of the Treaty of Bucharest and tried to bring them to Ottoman soil. Some Christian groups who had left Boghdan and were staying in Bessarabia and Budjak started to develop miscellaneous escape tactics and methods for penetrating into Ottoman side, forthwith upon the signature and execution of the Treaty. The local public servants of the Ottoman Empire and the Voivode not only facilitated but also provoked the trespass of these people into the other side. The Russian authorities, once after getting to know this weak structure, asked the Ottoman government give a harsh warning to all those responsible for these outcomes.

Another issue that brought the two states against each other in this geography was associated with security. The Greek raids started with the Greek Rebellion in 1821 created perturbation in Boghdan, and the Commander of Budjak was accordingly instructed to take measures. The commander replied to these instructions by sending letters confirming that all necessary measures had been taken, to his counterparts. Another issue that threatened Boghdan and its surrounding for the aspect of security was military activities of Russia in the region. Russia disturbed regional administrations especially during the Greek Rebellion, with its various troop shipments and fortifications. The knowledge and information gathered by the Voivode and governors on the issue through their spies were transferred to the central Ottoman headquarters, directly.

In the period inferred, attempts were made for the solution of the aforementioned problems through diplomatic channels. In the process of bringing a solution to these issues, the Voivode of Boghdan, Chief Superintendent (Commander) of Budjak, the Russian ambassador and *Sublime Porte* had undergone mutual talks at various levels. These authorities placed and kept communication at the upfront in solving matters brought to them as issues, by

establishing and maintaining mutual exchange of information in general. Both sides had endeavored immense efforts for the sustenance of peace between Russia and Ottoman Empire. In this context, practices required by the Treaty and respect for the rights of the counterparts had been the predominant understanding, that both sides worked to fulfill, during this period. At least documents available at hand supply us this information. For instance, during the Greek Rebellion, the Commanders of Budjak and Bessarabia both manipulated the situation to prevent Greek raids from Budjak and Bessarabia to Boghdan, twice, although the second was a bit delayed. Of course this perception is only possible since these documents were written in diplomatic language. It is therefore possible that both states may have some covered agendas under their counters, behind the understanding presented in these documents. However, given the limitations of this study, it is not practically possible to determine this.

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